MODERN POLITICS,

OR,

THE CAT LET OUT OF THE POCK.

A DIALOGUE.

It is a ſport to a fool to do miſchief, but a man of underſtanding hath wiſdom. PROV. x. 23.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another. GAL. v. 15.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
30 61
MAY

MODERN POLITICS,

OR, THE CAT LET OUT OF THE POCK.

A DIALOGUE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOHN DUNT, a Presbyterian Blacksmith,
GIBBY GRUNT, a Seceding Weaver.
} *Friends of the People.*

AND

MR TACIT NEUTER, a Schoolmaster, *a Friend to the Country.*

SCENE, *the Street, which changes to an Ale House.*

Dunt. YOUR servant, neighbour Grunt, how goes it?

Grunt. Thank ye, citizen; but what has become of you, I don't remember when I saw you at the Society?

D. Faith, neighbour, to tell you the truth, I am beginning to be a little scrupulous about these Meetings.

G. Scrupulous, citizen! What do you mean? Are not our Meetings for the purpose of obtaining a Glorious Parliamentary Reform? Do you scruple that?

D. No, neighbour; But——

G. But what?

D. Why I'm afraid all's not right, all's not fair.

G. All's not fair! Explain yourſelf: What do you mean?

D. To be plain, I don't like the conduct of your Secretaries, your Preſidents, Vice-Preſidents, &c. They ſay they have *private* meetings of their own, where matters are canvaſſed which they dare not publicly avow, and to which what they call the *common hands* are not admitted.

G. Poh, Poh, neighbour, you are impoſed upon, you have been converſing with ſome rich Anti-Reformer.

D. Not ſo, I aſſure you, Mr Grunt; my information was from a very honeſt man, a Zealous Reformer, who ſuſpects as I do, that ſome of our leaders have cloven feet, and that himſelf, and me, and ſuch others, are only to be the tools with which they intend to work out their ſcheme of plunging the Country into blood and ruin, in the hopes of catching ſomething for themſelves in the Shipwreck of the Nation.

G. Why, Mr Dunt, you aſtoniſh me, I always thought you was ſtaunch.

D. So I am *for my Country.* But I never meant to carry Reform ſo far as to dethrone the King, to degrade the nobility, and to introduce by blood, a ſpeculative, turbulent, popular form of government, in the room of a long tried, well pois'd, limited Monarchy.

BRITISH MUSEUM 30 MAY 61

G. Perdition, Mr Dunt! whom is it you accuſe of theſe deſigns?

D. I need not tell you whom it is I accuſe, you know them all as well as I do.

G. You are a Calumniator, Sir,—You are an Ariſtocrate.

D. You are a Traitor and a Blackguard.

G. Traitor, Mr Dunt! take care what you ſay; I always thought you a civil ſort of a man; But you muſt take care what you ſay; You muſt prove it; I will make you prove it.

D. So I can when there is occaſion, tho' I ſcorn to be an informer againſt my neighbour, as much as I abhor treacherous and bloody deſigns againſt the peace and proſperity of my native Country.

G. You are in a paſſion, Mr Dunt. If you will cool and conſider the ſad ſituation of this Country, loaded with an immenſe National Debt, you will confeſs that there is the higheſt neceſſity for a Reform.

D. The National Debt! That is the cant word you always introduce. I wiſh ſome of you would look at your own debts, contracted through idleneſs and intemperance. I wiſh you and others would.

G. Stop, neighbour, you are too hot upon the matter. Why wont you hear reaſon? Don't you conſider that it is theſe curſed taxes that has made us all ſo poor! Why, neighbour, we have ſo much to pay to clear the National Debt, that we——

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D. Clear the National Debt! that's of a piece with the nonſenſe and miſrepreſentations, with which you and ſuch others have impoſed upon the well-meaning and unwary. Why, Sir, I never paid a farthing of the National Debt in my life, nor have you either. I have ſaved ſomething for a ſore foot, and maintained my family decently, which is more than you can ſay.

G. Never paid a farthing of the National Debt in your life! What? don't you pay taxes for the leather upon your feet, for the candles you burn, and the beer you drink, &c. and do not theſe go towards the payment of that Debt?

D. They do; but not one ſtiver of the money comes out of *my* pocket.

G. Out of whoſe pocket then does it come?

D. Out of the pockets of my cuſtomers, upon whom (by virtue of my own ſovereign authority) I lay a counter-tax, which I include in the prices of the goods I ſell them.

G. But, Mr Dunt, would not your profits be greater if you had *no taxes* to pay, or at leaſt fewer taxes?

D. In the firſt place, to have *no Taxes* to pay, is what, Mr Grunt, I do not well underſtand, becauſe, in my poor apprehenſion, wherever there is a ſtate of Civil Society, be the Government Republican or Monarchial, a certain expence for the maintenance of thoſe who adminiſter the Law and Police of the

country, is neceſſary—this can only be made good by a tax upon all thoſe who enjoy the protection of ſuch a Government—Before therefore men can have *no taxes* to pay, they muſt return to the ſavage ſtate, which I ſhould be ſorry to ſee happen in my days.

G. But mark me, Mr Dunt, would not you be better off if your taxes were leſs ?

D. Not a whit, becauſe my cuſtomers would know as well as myſelf, that the leſs public burdens I had to pay, the cheaper I could afford to ſell my commodities.

G. But what ſay you, Mr Dunt, to the caſe of the Journeyman Artificer, or Day Labourer, who has *no commodities to ſell?* in what manner does he reimburſe himſelf, for the proportion of the National Debt which *he* pays.?

D. The labourer or artificer makes his employer pay all taxes for him ; the taxes *he* pays, are included in his wages ; if he had none ſuch to pay, his maſter would be obliged to ſhorten his wages, becauſe, as I have already ſaid, the maſter's price would in ſuch a caſe be ſhortened by his cuſtomer.

G. You run too faſt, Mr Dunt. You muſt confeſs that there *are* taxes paid, and pretty heavy ones too ; then pray, ſince neither the Merchant, the Tradeſmen, nor the Labourer pays them, who does pay them ?

D. The anſwer is eaſy : The payment of the Public Taxes falls ultimately upon the ſhoulders of the opulent, as indeed it ought

to do agreeably to nature and reaſon. The Merchant, the Artificer and the Day Labourer, and in ſhort every one who either ſells commodities, or has occaſion to uſe taxed ones, ſhoves the payment of theſe and all other taxes from off himſelf, upon his cuſtomer, or employer; at laſt they land upon thoſe who live upon the income of their eſtates, or ſalaries, but who have little or nothing to ſell, through the medium of which they can reimburſe themſelves for the Public Taxes they pay. If you will give yourſelf the trouble to examine this matter, you will find that *thus* it muſt ever neceſſarily *be* among Civil Society, where an *equality* of property does not take place.

G. O ho! You have got a new light.

D. Yes, through God's goodneſs I have, and am convinced, that that ſort of equality which I have heard you and others preach and maintain, would be fatal to the happineſs of Civil Society, becauſe as there would be then no one richer than another, induſtry would have neither ſcope nor inducement, and univerſal wretchedneſs and poverty would pervade the whole.

G. Well, neighbour Dunt, to wave other ſubjects for a little, and ſince you are now ſomething cooler, pray how could you be ſo uncivil as to call me a traitor?

D. Be quiet, Mr Grunt: let matters reſt as they are.

G. But I demand an explanation.

D. Demand! Well then, ſir, don't you remember, when at a certain houſe, that you drank D————n to all K——s, and ſucceſs to the arms of the French Republic; that you wiſhed the French would invade this country; that you ſaid you would join them, &c.

G. O, theſe were only the reveries of drink; beſides I don't remember ſuch things.

D. If *you* don't remember, there are others who do, and who have as well as myſelf deteſted your principles ever ſince.

G. My Principles! I defy any man to queſtion them; you are very unruly, Mr Dunt.

D. Not half ſo unruly as you was upon the night alluded to.

G. Come, landlady, bring us another gill.

D. No more gills, Mr Grunt; I have got enough of your company.

G. My company! D————n, I am company for the beſt of your titled Ariſtocrates, or your turn-coat blackſmiths.

D. Yes; you think ſo when you are drunk, but whether you are drunk or ſober, the world knows you to be no more than an arrant hypocrite of a weaver.

G. Hypocrite, Sir!

D. Yes hypocrite, *becauſe* you ſing Pſalms and attend religious duties on Sundays, and all the reſt of the week you know how you employ yourſelf.

G. And pray, Mr Dunt, how do I employ myſelf?

D. Since you muſt have it, then I tell you that your conſtant buſineſs except when at your loom (and when there too you endeavour by your diſcourſe to poiſon the minds of your ſervants), is to hatch plans to tear the entrails of your Country, and to correſpond with the black aſſaſſins of France, for the purpoſe of acting in your native land, the diſmal Tragedies which have lately diſgraced that devoted Country. And yet, you are a man who profeſſes the meek and Holy Religion of Jeſus, and do moreover, for a cloak to your villainy, partake punctually of its moſt ſolemn inſtitutions.

G. Scoundrel! you muſt inſtantly fight me.

Mr Tacit Neuter. Gentlemen, it muſt not be ſo in my company; we are neighbours, and I wiſh to prevent all diſputes here, or enquiries hereafter; for to ſpeak the truth, there has been ſo much ſaid, that I wiſh you would be friends before the matter goes farther.

G. I have no objections.

D. You ought not to have any, for I am acquainted with as much of your conduct as would bring you — to ——.

G. The gallows I ſuppoſe you mean.

D. It don't ſignify what I mean, I have ſaid enough, I only tender you one advice, take care of yourſelf.

G. Take you care of the Guillotine.

D. Yes, I dare ſay if you and your party ſhould ever get the upper hand, you will not be behind the bloody fiends of France,

in all manner of Injuſtice, Cruelty, Aſſaſſination and Murder.

G. It is falſe, the French *never* committed any Murders or Aſſaſſinations; they only revenged themſelves upon their enemies, as we will upon *our* enemies here, when the power is in our hands. D——n you both, you are not fit for my company, I am one of the Ki—ings of the Free---inds of the (*hicup*) People.

Exit Grunt *as drunk as a Swine.*

D. Honeſt Mr Neuter, that man has juſt now ſpoke the ſentiments of his party. I have, thank God, diſcovered their true Principles, in time to prevent me from being an innocent Inſtrument of their Crimes.

N. You know, Mr Dunt, I eſpouſe no party *publickly*, but I am a friend to the peace and proſperity of my country. You know, I told you ſix months ago, that the perſon who has now left us was a bad man, and that he and others of the ſame ſtamp were endeavouring, under pretence of a reform in Parliament, to pave the way for a Revolution in this country. Such a Revolution, even ſuppoſing it for a moment to be poſſible, could not be accompliſhed but at the expence of an ocean of blood. But he is regardleſs of that, you ſee how barefacedly he juſtifies the inhuman Maſſacres committed in France in cold blood, ſo inhuman indeed, that ſome of the Members of the French Convention, aſhamed of the horrid facts of the firſt days of September, propoſed to ſet

on foot an enquiry concerning them; to the everlaſting diſgrace of the French Nation, the affair was however huſhed up, and now compoſes part of the dreadful liſt of French crimes.

D. I have been hitherto blinded by miſrepreſentations; I thought I was engaged in an honeſt upright cauſe, until an accident diſcovered to me the contrary. I am indebted to a worthy Gentleman, a cuſtomer of mine, for having perfected the conviction I feel, by painting to me in true colours, the folly and perfidy of thoſe men with whom Grunt has aſſociated.

N. I believe you know, Mr Dunt, that I am your friend, as well as the friend of peace; refrain the company of Grunt and his brethren in iniquity, for I know that they have it in view to ruin our country. I truſt in God they will fail in their attempts; but they will no doubt involve many honeſt unſuſpecting people in miſery along with themſelves, for which I ſhall be heartily ſorry.

D. I know their deſigns are bad, and through God's aſſiſtance, I ſhall for ever refrain the company of theſe pretended reformers. It was as I ſaid by accident that I diſcovered their true Principles. A friend of mine, who had, like myſelf, joined their Society, (under the belief that there was no more meant by them, than a moderate Reform in Parliament,) began to ſuſpect they had ſecret deſigns, the nature of which

they did not chuſe to make him acquainted with. After one of their Meetings had broke up, the Chiefs or Leaders as uſual remained behind, and repaired privately to a Tavern. My friend had the curioſity to follow them, and by the connivance of the Waiter, was let into a room where he over-heard diſtinctly all their Treaſonable, Bloody and Atrocious Deſigns. My friend gave me the hint, and both him and myſelf have ſince that time abſented ourſelves from their Meetings. I am thankful to God that I have eſcaped ſo eaſily from the counſels of thoſe ſons of Belial.

N. It has been a maxim with me, Mr Dunt, all my life, to compare men's public declarations with their private lives, in order to form a right judgment of their ſincerity. Theſe men, who have inliſted themſelves under the banners of Reform, for the pretended purpoſe of enlarging the Liberties of their Country, and renovating its Conſtitution, are the moſt unfit perſons in the world for ſuch an undertaking, did the caſe demand it, and were their intentions ever ſo pure. There are no doubt honeſt men amongſt them, who are miſled; but the Chiefs, and a very great many of them, are of an oppoſite deſcription; bad men they are in private life, hypocrites in religion, and children in politics, that moſt difficult of all Sciences. Theſe reformers of Kingdoms and States are (ninety-nine out of an hundred of them) totally unacquainted

with the Conſtitution and Hiſtory of even their own Country,—fit perſons thoſe to form new plans for governing mankind, who are themſelves ignorant of the inſtructing page of Hiſtory, and the progreſs of Civilization among mankind; Hiſtory I ſay, by which the ſage and judicious compoſer of Political Inſtitutions, is enabled to form notions of the future conduct of mankind, by his obſervation of the paſt, and thereby to fix his ſyſtem upon experience, inſtead of truſting to untried theories. But the want of Political Knowledge in theſe pretended Friends of the People, is their leaſt fault; there are many among them who are very bad men, cruel unnatural huſbands and fathers, ſcoffers at religion, atheiſts, free-thinkers, bankrupts in their affairs, idle, diſorderly, drunken, diſſolute and unprincipled, "*lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God.*" This deſcription applies to thoſe among them who think themſelves moſt capable and knowing; the reſt are utterly unfit to form any judgment *at all* for themſelves, upon the ſubject of Politics: all their terms and arguments are at ſecond hand: it is no wonder it ſhould be ſo; they are illiterate working people, day-labourers, apprentices, and ſervants. Some of theſe men, inſtead of attempting to reform the Conſtitution, would be employed to better purpoſe in learning to read and write their mother tongue, and to underſtand the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion. They might

likewiſe with more advantage, look into their own conduct and practice, particularly towards their families, many of whom are ſtarving at home, while the idiot huſband is perhaps harkening to the harangues of ſome ſtill more idiot Politician, and ſquandering the money which ſhould ſupport his infant offspring.

D. I can vouch for the likeneſs of this picture, I have ſeen it often. I ſincerely blame myſelf for expending thoſe hours in aſſociating with idle and criminal men, which I might have employed in ſeeking the knowledge of my Maker. The topics and affairs of the Friends of the People, will be out of the queſtion upon a death-bed; the remembrance of miſpent time will be bitter to the man who is about to put on immortality.

N. I am glad to find you in ſuch a temper of mind, my worthy neighbour. We will now retire if you pleaſe to our own houſes. Let us be thankful that we can ſay we have a home; God knows how ſoon we may be diſturbed in the poſſeſſion of all that is dear to us. Our antient enemies, who may well be called the Scourges of Europe, are threatening us. Their threats would be vain, but alas! by circumſtances equally unnatural as aſtoniſhing, they will find friends in the boſom of our country. Soon will theſe friends of France perceive their miſtake: one day's intercourſe with their new aſſociates will ſhew them that theſe preten-

ded Aſſerters of the freedom of the Human Race, are themſelves *very Monſters of Tyranny and Oppreſſion*; trampling under foot every law of *God* and *Man*, which ſhall interfere with their inſatiable thirſt for dominion and plunder. But don't let us deſpond, theſe Gaſconading Ruffians will find TRUE BRITONS ready to receive them, ſhould they dare to pollute the ſoil of genuine liberty with their unhallowed and bloody footſteps. Yes, my good Neighbour, let us die for our Country, for our Liberties, for our Religion, for our Children, and for our Families. Let our eyes be ſhut in death, rather than to live to ſee the direful tranſactions, which thoſe Monſters whoſe hands are now reeking with blood, would introduce into our happy Iſland, were they to ſucceed in their daring enterpriſes.

D. Surely, my good neighbour, let us die for our Country, for our Religion and for our Liberties. Farewell, Good-night, and ſound repoſe.

FINIS.